

FINANCIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Financial literacy is vital for the academic and personal development of university students, as it directly influences their ability to manage their resources and maintain their economic stability. At the Faculty of Economics and Administration (FaEA), many students struggle to obtain reliable financial information and lack adequate knowledge in this area. The objective of this study is to provide a financial education workshop for FaEA students. This workshop will include materials tailored to their needs so they can learn to better manage their finances. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Two surveys were conducted: one before a virtual workshop to assess students' interest and prior knowledge, and another afterward to evaluate their perception of the workshop and its usefulness. Qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis, and quantitative data using statistical methods. The results showed that prior to the workshop, students lacked a high level of financial literacy, but afterward, they were provided with tools to make wiser financial decisions. The study revealed significant interest among FaEA students in improving their financial knowledge, as they are not well-prepared to make financially informed decisions. The workshop was well-received, highlighting the importance of personal finance in the lives of individuals, particularly students.

Keywords: Financial education; personal finance; university students

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1. INTRODUCCIÓN

Financial education has become a vital topic in the educational and social spheres, given that personal finances permeate the daily lives of children, adolescents, and adults. Financial literacy is invaluable for students' personal and academic development, due to their socioeconomic environment. Every day, they navigate diverse situations that require them to have a basic understanding of money and time management, which is essential for making responsible decisions. The ability to effectively manage personal finances not only fosters academic growth and success but also contributes to the overall development of the individual.

In this sense, financial education is emerging as an essential tool for fostering responsible behavior and strengthening economic autonomy from an early age. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how this knowledge is acquired and used within the student environment. Currently, young people actively participate in digital consumption, access banking services, and make decisions regarding spending, saving, and debt. However, numerous studies show low levels of financial literacy among adolescents and university students, which limits their ability to manage resources, plan for the future, and avoid risky financial behaviors. For example, a study by Puri and Pustika Ayuning (2023) revealed that financial literacy among students remains low, making them more prone to consumerist behavior and poor financial management. Despite increased access to financial information, many young people still lack the skills needed to apply this knowledge in their daily lives.

It is crucial that younger students acquire some knowledge, even basic financial literacy, to develop their skills. This is especially important considering that most of them are in a transition from constant parental support, in most cases, to financial independence with often limited resources. As students enter adulthood, the ability to manage their finances wisely becomes essential for their economic well-being, and acquiring basic financial knowledge from a young age is a vital tool for facing their future. Providing financial education helps new generations achieve a good life and economic freedom in the future (Mulyawan P, Dinata Putri & Pradnyadari, 2025).

Research indicates that many young people can be considered financially illiterate (Aisa Amagir, Henriëtte Maassen van den Brink b, Wim Groot c, Arie Wilschut 2022). Despite progress, significant gaps remain: on the one hand, many young people believe they have the skills to

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manage their money, creating a gap between perceived and actual knowledge; on the other hand, many students resort to dubious sources of financial information, such as social media pages that often spread misinformation or promote deceptive content. This raises the following questions: Do students have basic financial knowledge? Do they truly manage their resources effectively? With adequate knowledge, can these students develop financial habits and behaviors to meet their needs and prepare for unexpected events? In response to these questions, the aim is to enable them to develop and acquire new knowledge or reinforce the knowledge already obtained through the implementation of a financial education workshop.

Through student surveys, this workshop aims to identify obstacles in the process of acquiring financial knowledge. It then seeks to equip participants with the tools to face the financial challenges of their environment with greater confidence and responsibility. Therefore, we will focus specifically on incoming students in the Faculty of Economics and Administration, since although they will receive economic training, this does not necessarily mean they currently possess the knowledge needed to manage their daily expenses and financial demands.

2. METHODOLOGY

The data for this study was collected through surveys administered at two key points in the research. The first survey gathered initial information about participants' interests in personal finance and their willingness to participate in a financial education workshop. The second survey was conducted after the workshop to gather participants' opinions on the topics covered, their usefulness in daily life, and to measure their satisfaction with the content, which was designed to be understandable even for those without prior financial training.

This research employed a mixed-methods approach. The first survey was conducted from a qualitative perspective, as its objective was to understand participants' opinions, interests, and expectations regarding personal finance. The second survey, however, combined qualitative and quantitative methods: on the one hand, it gathered feedback on the workshop, and on the other, it obtained numerical data on the number of people who attended and participated until the end.

The data analysis was carried out in two phases. For the qualitative data, content analysis was applied to identify patterns and recurring themes in the participants' responses. For the

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quantitative data, descriptive statistics, such as percentages, were examined, facilitating a precise understanding of participation levels and perceptions of the workshop's usefulness.

The study participants were students from the Faculty of Economics and Administration (UNCo), located in the city of Neuquén. The group was characterized by a wide age range, from 19 to 40 years old, and was enrolled in their first through third years of study in the Public Accounting and Business Administration programs. Some students combined their university studies with work, which provided a complementary perspective on the practical application of personal finance knowledge in their daily lives. The sample consisted of students with a specific interest in topics related to basic investments, savings, and personal budgeting, an aspect that is significant considering the research objective.

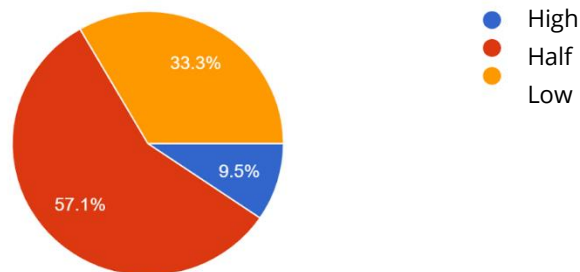
3. RESULTS

The research made it possible to collect significant data on students' level of knowledge and perceptions regarding financial education. The results of this study were obtained through two surveys, one before and one after the workshop. Data were gathered that reflect both the students' initial interest in the financial field and their final assessment of the content covered and its practical application.

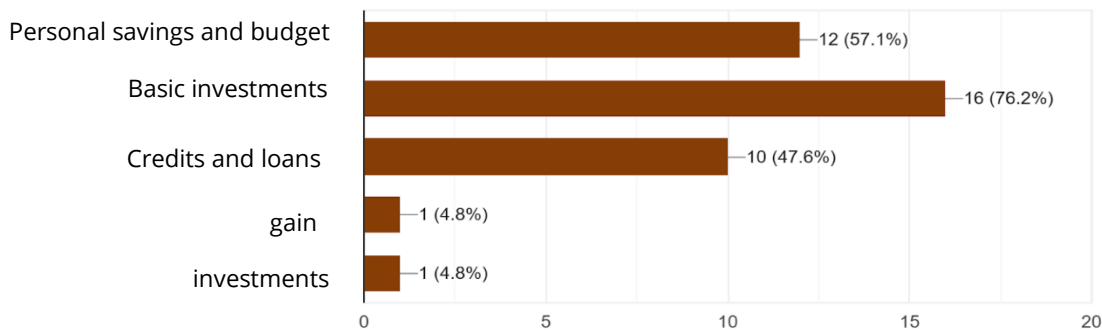
In the first survey, conducted before the workshop with 21 students, their level of knowledge regarding the concept of financial education, their specific interests, and their preferences regarding the format and time of the workshop were explored. Regarding prior knowledge, 57.1% of the students reported having an average level of understanding of financial education, 33.3% indicated a low level of understanding, and only 9.5% reported a high level of understanding. When asked about their willingness to attend the workshop, 85.7% expressed interest in participating, while 14.3% indicated they were not. Regarding the topics of greatest interest, 76.2% of the students highlighted their interest in learning about "Basic Investments," followed by "Savings and Personal Budgeting" (57.1%), and "Credit and Loans" (47.6%). Regarding the workshop format, the majority (81%) preferred it to be virtual, while the evening schedule (6:00 PM to 9:00 PM) was the most convenient for 71.4% of respondents.

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¿What level of knowledge do you consider you have about financial education?



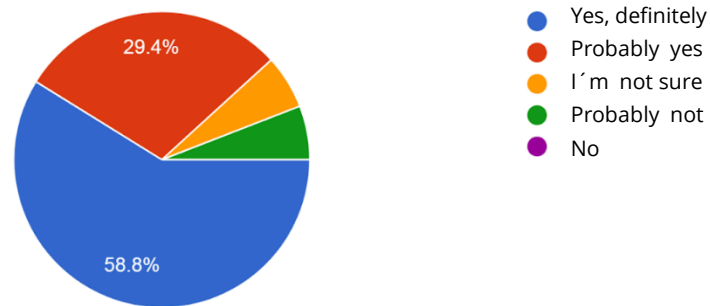
¿What topic are you interested in training in?



The second survey, administered after the workshop and completed by 17 students, assessed their overall satisfaction and their perception of the clarity of the topics covered. The results reflect high satisfaction: 41.2% of participants reported being "Very Satisfied" with the workshop, while 52.9% indicated they were "Satisfied." Regarding the relevance of the topics, 82.4% of respondents voted "Yes, I found them relevant" in terms of whether they addressed their personal needs, while 17.6% voted "Neutral." The content was considered "Very Clear" by 47.1% and "Clear" by 35.3%, suggesting that the accessible approach of the presentation was effective for the participants.

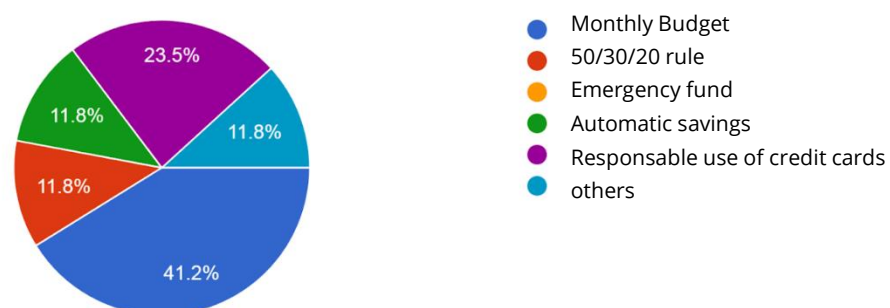
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¿Do you think you can apply any of the financial tool discussed in the workshop to your dily life?



Furthermore, 29.4% of students indicated that they would likely apply some of the tools discussed during the talk in their daily lives, while 58.8% considered that they definitely would. Finally, 5.9% were unsure about implementing these tools. Among the financial tools, as shown in the following graph, participants (41.2%) considered the "monthly budget" tool the most useful, while the second most useful (23.5%) was the responsible use of credit cards.

¿Which of the financial tolos or concepts presented do you consider to be most useful for you?

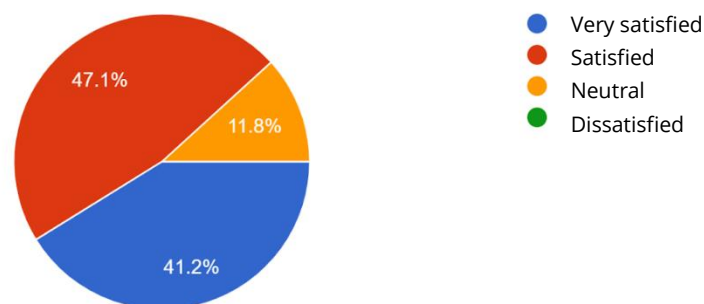


It is worth noting that 58.8% of participants expressed interest in participating in future financial literacy training activities, highlighting a continued need for financial education within the university context.

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In summary, these results indicate a positive response to the workshop and a willingness among students to apply the acquired knowledge to managing their personal finances. The high level of satisfaction expressed, along with the interest in future training, suggests that the inclusion of financial topics is a valuable resource for the academic and personal development of UNCo students.

¿How satisfied are you with the workshop format (presentation, duration, platform used)?



4. DISCUSIÓN

The results obtained before the workshop show that 57.1% of the students had an average level of financial literacy, while 33.3% had low knowledge of the subject and 9.5% had high knowledge. These results reflect that the majority of participants had limited financial literacy, which can be a limiting factor when making decisions regarding personal finances in their daily lives, such as basic investments, saving, etc. Lacking the necessary tools makes students susceptible to poor financial decisions, unnecessary debt, or compulsive spending.

At the time of the initial survey, participants showed a high willingness to participate in the workshop, reflecting a significant need on their part to acquire new tools that they may be realizing could be, or already are, necessary for their personal financial management.

The results following the workshop demonstrated its effectiveness. The students left very satisfied and stated that they felt more equipped to make certain decisions, and many expressed interest in future workshops.

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The students who participated in the workshop considered monthly budgeting and the responsible use of credit cards to be the most important and useful tools for them. These tools are fundamental for managing money and avoiding inappropriate practices in daily life. They were given practical tools and elements that, if reinforced for good management, can have a significant and direct positive impact on most aspects of personal financial management.

Given that most students have a low to average level of financial knowledge, it's clear that this type of financial education needs to be acquired at a younger age and be a continuous learning process. Integrating this knowledge and developing financial habits will better prepare students to face financial decisions and avoid unnecessary economic risks when they achieve a degree of financial independence.

In short, the workshop not only provided practical tools for managing personal finances but also fostered a greater awareness of the importance of financial education in students' daily lives.

5. CONCLUSIÓN

This study showed that, upon reaching a certain level of autonomy, students are not well-prepared to make financial decisions. The implementation of this workshop provided them with tools to lead more organized and responsible lives in this area.

The results indicate that financial education is essential for people's lives, especially for students, both for their academic and personal development.

The low level of financial literacy demonstrates that this type of learning should be addressed at a younger age. If students have access to this knowledge, they can master these tools early on and avoid a sea of doubt when faced with situations requiring financial decisions. Early learning would reduce the uncertainty of making financial decisions in the future.

Technological progress and development are tools that can be used to enhance financial literacy. The use of budgeting and resource apps can complement the tools students have learned, providing them with a more engaging and adaptable experience tailored to their individual needs.

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In conclusion, providing students with financial education and preparing them from a young age in a timely and consistent manner will better equip them to face future financial decisions and make more informed and responsible choices.

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